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A Month
of
Freedom



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Edward L. Bulfinch

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= Ward, Thomas =

A MONTH OF FREEDOM.

AN AMERICAN POEM.

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E.H.
Mrs. A.C. Kulaizer
May 21 '36

A MONTH OF FREEDOM.

ONCE more I'm free. For many a weary month
I've borne a galley slave's degrading toil,
Without the rude companionship, the laugh
And song of brother slaves, which rob his fate
Of half its anguish: and a hermit's gloom
Without the fond devotion, which by dreams
Of future bliss and glory can transform
E'en loneliness itself into a heaven.

Born with that thirst for fame which teaches us
To laugh at toil, woo danger as a bride,
And welcome death itself upon the paths
Of glory, and yet wedded to a lot
Whose loathsome toil can give no higher prize
Than mere existence, and unfits the mind
For aught beyond its sad ignoble strife.
Cursed with a taste for pleasure, which e'en from
This world's illusions could have framed itself

A paradise, yet fettered to the dull
Routine of life which knows no change, and brings
No joy, save when the labours of the day
Are closed, to be once more alone,—to feel
Upon my feverish cheek the damp, chill air
Of night which soothes but to destroy,—to stand
Once more beneath the midnight vault of heaven,
And feel my spirit break at length the chains
Which bound it to the earth, and soar among
The bright mysterious worlds above,—not with
The equal flight of science, but the wild
And reckless joy with which a bird released
From thralldom, higher and still higher soars
Upon its aimless yet exulting course.

Oh, there are things harder to be endured
Than the stern tortures and the fearful gloom
With which the warrior bard of Greece has clothed
Thy fate, Prometheus ! *Thou hadst achieved
Thine immortality.* Thou hadst still warred
With deities alone, and knewest not
The base and sordid strife of human things,
In which the weary spirit loathes alike
The combat and the combatant. Thy chains
Were adamantine, and thy tortures such

As might appease the vengeance of a god ;
But yet, oh never, never didst thou know
The mental agony, the sickening heart
Of him who strives in vain to burst the bonds
Which bind him to obscurity, and feels
That restless energy of thought, which once
He hoped would raise him o'er th' unthinking crowd,
Now turned and preying on himself with more
Than vulture fierceness. But 'tis not to speak
Of things which have been, and should still be borne
In silence, that I'm weaving now this wild
Unpolished verse ; 'tis to express the joy,
Almost delirious joy, which an escape,
A brief escape from toil has brought me. Free !
Free as the wind which wanders where it lists.
Free to roam o'er our wondrous land, and free
To woo the goddess Nature, and to snatch
The fresh and virgin charms which linger still
Around her here. Away then with the notes
Of woe ! My chains are broken, and I leave
My gloomy dungeon to dart onward in
The rapid car with speed that mocks the winds,
And see the frowning cliff and woody dell,
The laughing village and the fertile plain
Glide by alike the changes of a dream.—

To stem with motion scarce less swift
Some noble river's chafing stream, and watch
The varied forms of Nature's loveliness,
That overlook its mirrored brink.—To climb
To the lone mountain-top, or float upon
The bosom of the crystal lake.—To stand
Before the rainbow of the cataract,
To watch its flashing waters, and to hear
Its ceaseless thunder.—To revel in all
The charms of Nature, and when sated with
Her lone companionship, to plunge again
Into the joyous throng of those who mix
Not in the sullen strife of interest,
But hurry onward in the laughing chase
Of pleasure. A few fleeting weeks,—
Alas ! how few !—and yet the hasty gleams
Of pleasure which shine through the clouds of life
Are still as weeks to years. In my brief month
Of freedom let me gather all the joys
Which others scatter o'er the year ; and when
The draught is drain'd, sadly and silently
I'll to my weary dungeon turn again.

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And this is Washington ! This the proud seat
Of empire for the nation of a day,
Whose giant childhood now is rivalling
The full-grown strength of other lands. It is
An infant city : with its wide-spread bounds
All sprinkled o'er with trees and villages,
'Tis a fit emblem of the infant realm
O'er which it reigns. To one whose soul is wont
To sicken in the crowded haunts of men,
This half-built city,—this wide field where still
Nature and art would seem to struggle both
For mastery, is fairer than the dense
And stifling wilderness of walls, from which
The works of man have quite supplanted those
Of his Creator ; as the artless grace
Which lingers still o'er childhood is more fair
Than manhood's sordid vice. And yet they say
The charms of youth which seem to linger here
Are but the harlot's hollow bloom, and vice
Reigns in its most mature and basest forms ;
And that corruption stalks abroad, nor wears
The mask which she had yet been wont to keep
In this our youthful land. Well ! be it so.
A least the soul sinks not in sadness here
Before the noisy crowd, nor does the eye

Wander in vain for some memorial
Of the fair country's beauty, nor in vain
Does the breast heave for the pure air of heaven.

And this majestic dazzling pile, where they
At once our servants and our rulers meet
In council, the elected sages sent
From all the mighty tribes whose banded strength
Now grasps the red man's fair inheritance.
Like the wide realm which hears from its proud halls
The voice of legislation, it has much
That pleases not the too fastidious eye,
And much to rouse the critic's cavillings ;
Yet noble as a whole, winning respect
And admiration e'en from those who roam,
Rather to search for petty faults, than feel
Beauties which only meet th' expanded view.
A wilderness of art ! But still to me
Its costly columns do not seem so grand
As the rough pillared trunks, through which the eye
Wanders in nature's haunts ; and the proud arch
Of these high ceilings is not half so fair
As nature's green and woodland canopy ;
And this eternal echo which still rings
Around like distant music,—it seems not

So sweet as the free vocal melody
Which wakes the echoes of the forest's depths.

And this wide hall, in which our motley throng
Of legislators use to hold their loud
Deliberations ;—where is wont to rise
The noise of echoing doors and tramping feet,
Joined with the sound of countless voices mixed
In argument, or tale, or jest, or laugh,—
All fitfully surmounted by the tones
Of some despairing orator, who seems
Alike Demosthenes when he harangued
The waves of ocean, speaking but to try
If he can raise his voice above the wild
Tumultuous din, rather than with the hope
Of being heard or heeded ; and e'en this
Perchance surmounted still by the strained voice
Of the exhausted master of debate,
Rising through the mad uproar, like the cry
Of the shrill sea-bird o'er the ocean storm,
And all as uselessly : here, where these sounds
Are wont to join in tumult, striving each
For mastery, and all confused, and mixed,
And multiplied again a hundred fold
By the unceasing echoes,—what a deep

And chilling silence reigns ! How my lone voice
Rings through the wide-extended vacancy !
In my glad boyhood, when I thought this world
Was but the lists in which to wage the strife
Of glory, and that time, and health, and life
Itself were worthless save as coin to buy
Ambition's gewgaws, with what eagerness
I longed to mingle too in the fierce war
Of public life ! What high and daring hopes
I framed of filling some proud destiny
In the tremendous changes which await
America ! And this proud hall,—how oft
It mingled with those dreams ! How oft I seemed
To stand here, even here where now I stand ;
And, as it seemed, on every side was spread
A dazzling sea of faces ; and methought
That my own voice was ringing cheerily
Around me, and their eyes were kindling e'en
As mine were kindled, and the excitement which
Within me glowed was spreading rapidly
Its fire, over the lip and cheek and brow
Of each ;—and how my boyish bosom swelled
With the proud thought that I could rule them all !
Could I have seen then, as I since have done,
This hall filled with the rulers among whom

My fancy placed me,—could I then have heard
The ceaseless din and tumult, which demand
A louder voice and firmer strength than oft
Will be the lot of one, between whose mind
And body there has been a life-time war,—
Could I have known that here the highest meed
Of praise is often won by brutal strength,
Th' assassin's eye and hand, and savage thirst
For human blood,—could I have witnessed then
The sands of dulness, and the rocks
Of party feeling, over which the waves
Of Henry's eloquence had rolled in vain,—
If the same fancy, which before me spread
The "summer sea of glory," had revealed
Its "depths and shoals,"—it would perchance have
chilled

The stern devotion, which had made me swear
To offer up a youthful heart upon
Ambition's shrine, and sacrifice to her
My other loves, and all th' unthinking joys
Of boyhood: and it would perchance have soothed
The fierceness of that agony, with which
In after times I felt the withering hand
Of sickness slowly riveting the chains
That were to bind me to obscurity

Forever. Well have sages said that 'tis
A hand of mercy which has veiled from us
The future; and the best of all it is
That clouds are thrown around thy lofty heights,
Ambition! Who would dare the toilsome steep,
Could he but know the barren rocks which form
The summit? But I waste my golden hours
Among the works of men, when I should be
Alone with Nature. Forward! forward! Thanks
To bright Invention's magic power, which binds
Our chariot wheels with swifter wings than those
Of Irak's dove.¹ —And if I cannot leave
The vulture thought, yet in the rapid chase
She cannot with her piercing talons rend
My quivering vitals, nor with so much calm
And deep intenseness drive her bloody beak,
As when, Prometheus-like, I'm bound in chains
To the lone rock of sad degrading toil.

* * * * *

The wide and gently-heaving Chesapeake,
Mother of Waters!² Well that Indian name
Attests the wild and unschooled poesy,

Which Nature and her glorious works had breathed
Into the thoughtless savage—gaining nought
From learning's scroll and asking nought from fame.
Mother of Waters !—Calmly spread at length,
With those huge rivers ranged along thy side,
Alike the out-stretched whelps of some wild beast,
All clinging to the parent teats. Yet they
Drain nought from thee, but ever pour their floods
Into thy bosom, making thee the pride
Of e'en our western waters. 'Times are changed
Since first that wild adventurer, the stern
And daring Smith, explored almost alone
This infant ocean. In his fragile bark
Breasting its storms, and by his skill alone
Evading yet their wrath,—piercing the haunts
Of forest kings, and braving their wild hordes
Of warriors, with that feeble crew inspired
By his own spirit, and led by the spell
Of higher thought and daring. Many years,
And yet few for the changes which they wrought,
Have passed since from these low and wooded shores
The startled Indians first beheld that strange
And lonely sail, slow rising o'er the waves
Like the first cloud which bodes the coming storm.

There was a deep and all-absorbing love
Of liberty in that young Englishman !
Even from boyhood 'twas his joy to roam
Through the wild forest, or in some lone glade
To spend whole days alone, training his frame
To feats of arms, or poring o'er the page
Of science. At an age, when other youths
Are seeking but to learn to wear with grace
The fetters of society, he left
His native land for foreign climes, and made
The ranks of war his home. In the fresh glow
Of manhood, when others yield to the thrall
Of pleasure, and upon themselves for life
Are riveting her weary fetters, he
Had wandered wild and wide o'er land and sea,
And made danger his comrade, and had looked
On death until its terrors all were gone,
And he could laugh full in the phantom's face.
He had pierced to the bounds of what was then
Th' enlightened world, and fought in Christian ranks
Against the heathens. He had raised himself
By skill and daring to a noble rank
In arms, and made him friends of princes. He
Had fought upon the listed field, before
The combined beauty and the chivalry

Of Christendom and Heathenesse, and won
A higher meed of praise than e'er success
Showered upon a warrior's name, unless
In legends of romance. He had been left
As dead upon a battle-field, and saved
To be a captive in the heathen land.
He had bound in the chains of love, the fair
And noble Eastern lady, who held him
In thralldom as a suitor's gift. Again
Fortune had sunk him to the lowest depths
Of bondage, chained and doomed to menial toil.
He had slain his oppressor, and escaped
Once more to Christian lands. Now wandering
Through lonely forests, and now revelling
With princes, he through Europe's realms had held
His way, to seek new dangers and new fields
Of glory in the wilds of Africa.

Having drained to the dregs each varied draught
Of danger and excitement,—having lived
In his brief youth far more of life than oft
Has been crowded into the longest age
Of other men,—back to his native land
He roamed once more. He came not as he went,
A friendless boy ; he came in the full flush

Of manly beauty, trumpeted by fame,
And armed with passports to the hearts of all.
The men panted to offer up their share
Of praise to one whose friendship had been prized
By Europe's noblest sons. The women all
Were dying to behold and love the man,
Whose wild adventures mocked the strangest tales
Of chivalry; and who to beauty's power
Added a name whose glory Europe scarce
Could bound, and the still more romantic charm
Of those wild loves in the far heathen land.
The jealous portals of society
To him were opened wide. He roamed at will
Through its enchanted palaces, and 'twas
To find that they were but the haunts of fiends,
The demons of satiety and care.
For a brief space he bowed to fashion's thrall,
And 'twas to learn that even gilded chains
Are galling still. Free as the desert steed,
Or the wild sea-bird, he had roamed o'er land
And ocean. Could he bear the dull sad round
Of fashion's pleasures? He had played the game,
The thrilling game of battle, where the stake
Was life, the prize was glory. Could he join
The petty strife and childish rivalry

Of fashion's minions ? He had won the heart
Of that fair Eastern girl, who loved him for
Himself alone, and sought to give him wealth,
And rank, and liberty, and in return
Had asked no boon but love. And could he care
To win the heartless smile of the cold belle
Of polished life, who offers up her love
Upon ambition's shrine, and only seeks
To add another and a nobler slave
To her proud train of suitors ? From the smiles
Of rank and power, and the blandishments
Of beauty, he in sadness turned away,
And sought Virginia's dark and lonely woods.

'Tis true that there danger and death beset
His path. But what were these to one who left
Behind the anguish of satiety ?
'Tis true that there hunger, and toil, and wounds,
And harsh captivity awaited him.
But what were these to one who had endured
The tortures of inaction ? What was it
To him, if in that desert colony
He must endure all that appalls the soul
And most exhausts the frame of common men,
Crowned with the thanklessness of those for whom

He toiled and fought ? It gave him liberty,
And wild adventure, and the boundless range
O'er land and wave, the joy of hostile strife,
The thrill of danger quickly followed by the glow
Of proud reliance on the powers which ne'er
Had failed, the hand of comrades in the hour
Of peril, and their joyous jest and laugh
In times of safety. I can understand
Full well the restless spirit, which to him
Had made his snow-swept couch on the cold earth,
Softer than beds of down ; and the rough food
Won at long intervals and by the risk
Of life, far sweeter than the crowded board
Of luxury ; and the free voice of woods,
And wind, and waves, more welcome to his ear
Than aught of music in the haunts of men.
And I can feel the wild, wild joy, which e'en
Apart from thoughts of fame, thrilled through his veins
As he, the first of Europe's sons, in doubt
And danger held his chartless way across
This wide " ocean-like water : " ³ now,
Cautiously stealing o'er its treacherous depths,
Watching each signal of the coming storm ;
Now clinging to the thickly wooded shore,

Guarding with watchful eye and arms prepared,
Against the ambush of the savage foe.

But times are changed, since that small bark alone
Specked this broad water. 'Tis the highway now
For the glad myriads of the growing realm,
Whose gasping infancy was saved so oft,
By that adventurer. The swift steam arks,
'Those moving hostelries, in luxury
And safety bear us o'er his lonely course.
Full oft from other points they cross our way,
Dashing through the vexed billows, sending o'er
The flood a broken strain of music, lost
Almost as soon as caught, and as they pass
Giving a hurried glimpse of happy crowds
Of faces for an instant seen, and then
For ever gone. Far and near is spread
The sail of commerce. Many a stately bark
Is gliding by, gently and gracefully
Rising and dipping o'er the summer waves.
On every side the sails of others swell
Before the breeze, more and more distant, till
They dwindle to faint specks, which the strained eye
Can scarcely catch on the horizon's verge.

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The mild and softly flowing Delaware !
Gliding along as if afraid to mar
The deep repose with which on every side
Beauty is sleeping on its tranquil banks.
They tell me that the weary denizens
Of wealth have built them here their bowers of ease ;
And well these fair creations of their hours
Of freedom show that deep and innate love
Of nature and of beauty, which had long
Been stifled in the city's slavery.
Through the imbowering foliage brightly gleam
The graceful villas with their fair white walls,
And pillared porticoes, and clustering flowers,
And verdant lawns gracefully sweeping down
To meet the river, edged with trees whose boughs
Low drooping kiss their image trembling in
The gentle wave below. In these fair scenes
Each sad remembrance, and each thought of gloom,
And every dark foreboding leaves the soul,
And like the facile bosom of the stream,
It takes the hue and semblance of the calm

And placid beauty which is spread around ;
And the vain fancy almost makes us deem
This gentle loveliness the harbinger
Of hope and joy. And such thou wast to us,
Beautiful river ! in the war between
The right of weakness and the strength of wrong,
Which ushered us in olden times among
The nations. When that small and patriot band
Had found their untrained valour powerless
Against oppression's mercenary ranks ;
When each successive battle had but served,
To dye the bosom of their native land
With blood in vain, and cumber it anew
With her devoted sons ; and backward drove
A still more shattered remnant, flying still
O'ermatched and destitute, until at last
Their bloody foot-prints marked the frozen ground,
And cold and want struck deeper than their foes ;
When shrunk the timid from th' unequal strife,
And e'en the best and bravest whispering spoke
Of sad submission, and all seemed subdued,
And dark, and hopeless, save th' unyielding soul
Of Washington ;—'twas first upon these banks
That the disastrous tide of battle turned.

'Twas here that feeble, faint, exhausted band,
Which scarce had seemed to have the power to drag
Its wounded length along its blood-stained course,
Rose as a fiery dragon on its foes,
And wrested twice from their astonished grasp
The prize of war, and sent them cowering back
To gain new strength to cope with their despised
And prostrate quarry. And in after times,
When that eventful strife was o'er, and he,
Whose valour had thus led his country's arms
To victory, now ruled in wisdom o'er
Her infant councils,—it was on these shores
That the fair bands of maids and matrons strewed
With flowers his way across the fields, o'er which
He had in times of doubt and peril led
Their husbands and their fathers ; and 'twas here
That they invoked those blessings on his head,
Which still are dearest from our native land,
And ever sweetest in the gentle voice
Of beauty. What emotions must that scene,
The smiles of that fair band, and the sad thoughts
Of other days have waked within a breast
Like his alive as well to every soft,
As every lofty feeling of the soul !

The fame of that all-noble being seems
An ark too sacred to be rashly touched
By a weak hand like mine. Why speak of *him*
To those upon whose hearts his memory
Is stamped for ever, joined with every fond
And holy feeling, which is wont to rise
Within the human soul to that one word—
Our Father? Why essay to swell the praise
Of one, whose name alone still throws the awe
Of reverence upon the laughing face
Of childhood, and spreads o'er the cheek of youth
The shade of thought, or kindles there the glow
Of emulation, and calls to the eye
Of age the tear of fond devotion, drawn
From the shrunk fountains which have long been dry
To every other feeling? Even now
The flood of deep emotion, which the thought
Of him has raised within my breast,—the crowd
Of feelings struggling each for utterance,
Seems to forbid that I should farther seek
To twine his name within my idle verse.
His tale is graven on a far more high
And lasting tablet than the lying page
Of poesy. And there it stands, a link
To bind us to the noble times of old;

A lesson to the sordid selfishness
Of modern days. In a polluted age,
He joined the patriot virtue of old Rome,
With Spartan modesty and courage, ruled
And tempered all, by the stern self-control
And wisdom of the sage of ancient Greece.
In a base, venal age, he staked his wealth,
And life, and fame upon a desperate cause ;
And when his daring and his skill alone
Had won for us the victory which few
Had hoped, he wrung no treasure from his faint
And feeble country ; and he turned away
From the bright meed of dazzling power, which
A grateful people, and an army bound
With ties of love, in rivalry had heaped
Upon him. The delusive meteor whims
Of fancy all were impotent with him.
Each faculty and power of his mind
Bowed in subjection to the sway of thought.
The childish vanity,—the thirst for praise,
Which have so often led the great to strive
Rather to dazzle than to serve mankind ;
To seek their favour for the present hour,
Before their lasting interest ; all these
Were powerless with him. Each hope, and wish,

And feeling of his soul was sternly ruled
By his pure love of country. On the rock
Of self-approval he had made his stand,
And there the storm of power might burst in vain,
And all in vain the gentle summer waves
Of public favour courted him to launch
Upon their treacherous depths. His country's good!
His country's glory! These were the sole rules
Of action which he knew. His only end
Was still to serve his country, e'en against
Her will,—e'en at the risk of forfeiting
For a brief time her love. And he chose well.
And even if, like other conquerors,
He too had toiled for selfish ends alone,
And laughed at patriotism as the lure of fools,
Still he had chosen wisely. In the race
Of fame, who wins as high a meed of praise
As his? What despot's thralldom ever matched
The tyranny of love, with which he ruled
A land of willing freemen? Who through life,
Or after death, has reached the boundless power,
With which his name now sways, and yet shall sway
To latest times the minds of men? The still
Unchanging watchword in the sacred cause
Of Liberty,—forbidden, hushed, and feared

By tyrants,—loudest sounded still, where men
Are leagued to free and to exalt their kind.

Something of him their father we may trace
In those whose swift-extending numbers spread
Over the spacious realm, won by his arms
And founded by his wisdom. Calm, and full
Of thought. Patient of danger and of toil.
Stern in their morals,—rather cherishing
The homely household virtues, than the false,
The heartless graces of society.
Proud of their native land—thoughtful and cold
In all except their love of liberty.
Slow to aggression,—in resistance quick,
And calmly reckless of aught else, except
Submission's infamy. More used to yield
Obedience to the rule of judgment, than
The whim-of fancy. Quick to feel the power
Of beauty, and yet rather seeking it
In fair reality, than in the wild
Chimeras of poetic fantasy.
What has their land to do with poesy?
On every side its bright realities
Shame the creations of the bards
Of other climes. And what has it to do

With the illusive legends of romance ?
In its wide regions, which embrace each grade
Of men and things, from polished elegance
To savage wildness, may be met at will
Stranger adventures than were ever coined
By lying artist. In its sons is found
As much of high and daring chivalry,
And in its artless daughters more of grace
And beauty, than has ever decked the page
Of sickly fancy. In the aged realms,
Where time and custom have effaced the charms
Of Nature's workmanship, it may be well
That they should ask for beauty from the hand
Of fiction. What has she to do in lands
Where all still glows with the bright hues of youth ?

But I have wandered far, beautiful stream !
From thy fair banks. And who could tightly hold
The reins of reason o'er his vagrant thoughts,
In scenes like this which spreads around me now ;
Lazily floating in my rocking skiff
Between these twin and rival villages,⁴
Whose glittering fairness rather serves to aid
Than mar the charms of Nature, like a gem
Upon the hand of beauty. What a deep

And placid stillness reigns on every side !
Plenty and beauty hand in hand now rule
These shores, once wasted by the steps of war,
And commerce pours its treasures undisturbed
Through the fair stream from which in olden time
The hand of war had swept her peaceful sails.
The lounging sailor in that passing bark
Looks listlessly upon his drooping sail,
And little recks he of those times of strife
And danger, which e'en now were gliding o'er
My memory. That gently sloping bank !
How like a picture in its glowing hues
And deep repose ! How sweetly shaded o'er
By those wide-spreading trees, save here and there
The scattered groups of sunshine which have found
A way through the dense foliage, and rest
Like sleeping flocks upon the velvet turf.
Brightly the surface of the river gleams,
Unruffled all, save where the sturgeon throws
His glittering length on high, an instant poised
In air, then plunging headlong down again
Into the splashing wave. The swift steam-ship
Now breaks the tranquil stillness of the scene,
Hurrying on in dazzling grace and pride,
Dashing the vexed water from its swift wheels,

Carelessly breasting current, wind, and tide,
The beautiful reality—the bright
Imbodied spirit of that spectre ship,⁵
Which in our country's timid infancy
Haunted its lonely coasts. O'er its broad track
Of surging foam, lightly the dun smoke floats,
Marking its course alike through air and wave.
The billows parted from its rapid prow
Have reached our little skiff, which lightly bounds
Above them, and they onward roll against
The grassy shore, tossing their crests in air.
Along that western bank the steam-car holds
Its still more rapid and more wondrous course.
Swift winding on the length of its huge train,
Like some strange monster,—some dread behemoth,
Whose fearful strength and speed, the art of man
Has made obedient to his slightest touch,
As the trained courser to the silken rein.
On it has hurried in its rushing course,
Almost before the eye could grasp its form.
Now its reluctant roar dies on the ear
Like muttering thunder, and the light cloud left
By its fiery breath rests in mid air.

“Once more upon the waters.” Free once more
From the foul dens of human things. Once more
Abroad with Nature. How that mountain breeze
Freshens the fevered cheek, wasted and wan
From the foul atmosphere polluted with
The breath of thousands! How the lulling voice
Of the hoarse dashing waters soothes the ear
Jarred by the crowded city’s brattling din!
How the unnumbered smiles that dimpling play⁶
Over the water, and the varied charms
That grace its brink,—the thickly wooded bank,
The rare imbedded farm won here and there
From the wild woods by cultivation’s hand,
The fair white villa cresting the dark cliff,
Those wondrous palisadoes rising there
In beautiful array, as if to mock
The proudest works of art,—oh! how these cheer
The soul when sick with watching the dull stream
Of human things to mark in each, the still
Recurring shades of childish vanity,
Or leering lust, or foul intemperance.
The princely Hudson! winding on through scenes
Which now awe with the wild sublimity
Of nature, and now charm us by the soft
And gentle graces they have won from art.

The noble Hudson ! chaining fast the eye
With beauty's spell, yet raising in the soul
Far sterner thoughts and deeper feelings by
Its proud memorials of other times.
Many a lofty mount is rising up
Before us, from whose top in days of old
The battlements of war frowned sternly down
Upon the placid river. Dark green woods
Now overshadow their once naked heights,
And scarce the eye can trace the mouldering walls
Of those old fortresses. Yet long their names
Shall live in history, and kindle still
The glow of filial love and gratitude
In those whose fathers once were battling there
For liberty. But not of war and blood
Alone does the fair stream speak to the soul.
Soft thoughts and gentler recollections now
Crowd on us. Many a name around us sounds
Which by the voice of genius has been made
Familiar to the ear ; and many a cliff
Is gliding by, upon whose brow the hand
Of genius hangs a garland far more bright
And lasting than the blood-stained laurel wreath
Of war ; and every village, bay, and vale
Is brightening up on mem'ry's page his fair

Creations. Irving! Our own Irving! He,
Who sought to throw his gentle spirit o'er
The souls of kindred nations, and essayed
To quell each harsh and angry thought which sprang
From ancient strife and modern rivalry,
And strove to bind us to our mother land
Once more;—not with subjection's galling chains,
But with the lightly worn and silken bonds
Of kind affection. Our own Irving! He,
Who smooths each wrinkle from the face of care,
And drives away the scowl of hate, the sneer
Of scorn, and kindles on the lip the smile
Of sweet benevolence, and from its fount
Calls up the tear of virtue. He, who throws
Over the realms of thought, the purple light
Of language soft and rich and beautiful,
As the all-glorious hues which autumn sheds
On his own land;—a poet in all else,
Save that he has not bound his free-born thoughts
In jingling fetters. Our second father!
Who in the walks of taste and science won
To his loved native land a place as high,
As that which Washington in olden times
Achieved for us in the proud ranks of war.

But now that gleaming monument, the stern
Gray walls of that old fortress, and the cliffs
Frowning beyond, tell that I've reached the point,
Where long, long years ago the flood threw off
The mountain's thralldom. Bright and glorious stream!
Thou too hast burst thy bonds asunder! Thou
Art flowing on in careless grandeur now
Growing in strength and dignity, alike
The land of which thou art the type and pride.

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On the lone mountain top. Around me are
The mould'ring walls of the decaying fort.
And I have gazed on the o'erwhelming scenes
Of grandeur which are spread far, far beneath,
And I have turned away "dazzled and drunk
With beauty;" and I've stood upon its choked
And moss-grown fountain's brink, and clamber'd down
To wander through its dark and dripping vaults.

In the old war for freedom, when the foe
Poured from the north their best and bravest bands,
Leagued with the faithless savage horde, and from

The south concurring ranks back, back, from cliff
To cliff along th' embattled Hudson drove
Our fathers,—here they made their latest stand.
Like eagles in their eyry, girt by rocks
O'er which the eye grows dim and the brain reels,
They hurled their fierce defiance on the foe
And dared his utmost vengeance. And at last,
When treason wound its foul and poisoned way
Within their nest, still undismayed they dashed
The serpent from their bosom, and fought on
Unconquered to the end. 'Tis a proud spot
To an American. He in whose soul
Lingers the love of his own native land,
Will feel it swell within his bosom here,
And scarce the pride of manhood keeps it down
Beneath the fountains of the eye. 'Tis proud
To stand upon the rock against whose base
Invasion's waves broke harmlessly. And if
They had prevailed,—if their united strength
Had risen high and rolled the flood of war
And carnage o'er these walls,—it would have been
A pleasant thing to die for freedom here.

But he, the traitor,—he, whose step where now
I stand has wound through the rough soldiery,

Each one of whom had asked no boon but death
For him,—he, whose proud voice has rung where all
Is now so silent, winning to its tones
The prompt obedience of a soldier's love,—
Oh ! could he barter this for gold ? Full oft
In other lands there have been traitors, who
Were galled by tyrants' chains, and sold their faith
For liberty. But he alone betrayed
The cause of freedom. He alone rushed back
To chains, and sold himself, and sought to sell
His native land to slavery. But why
Do I pollute with human infamy
The page, which should be sacred to the charms
Of nature ? History has placed her brand
Upon him, and to us his treachery
Was harmless. Would it had been so to those
Who sought to purchase it. That noble youth !—
Ah ! would that on his head had not recoiled
The selfsame treason which he strove to wield
To our destruction. Would he had not died
A felon's death, while the true felon lived
To infamous old age. But he sleeps well
In his own native isle, and his brief life
Has won the tears of love, his country's praise,
A spotless name in history, and sad

And fond regrets e'en from his enemies.
Who would not choose a fate like this, though bought
By the fierce anguish of his dying pang,—
Who would not choose his death before a life
Of baffled treason, conscience-scourged, and galled
With curses e'en from those, who paid the price
Of his dear-bought and useless perfidy.

Here where the foot of foeman never trod,
And where the flag of freedom never sunk,—
Here the republic trains its youth to arms,
And all around us speaks of war. Full oft
The cannon's startling voice rolls through the hills
Its mimic thunder, and oft o'er the plain
Rings the shrill burst of martial music. Far
Below me now their tents like children's toys
Glitter upon the green, and they themselves
Dwindled to pigmies seem in sport to make
Their graceful evolutions. It was well
To place them here,—and well they prove themselves
Worthy a country's care, in the dark walks
Of art and science, in the dazzling, proud,
And beautiful array of war, and in
The soldier's frank and gentle courtesy.

When Kosciusko, the enthusiast
Who worshipped at the shrine of Liberty,
Till she became an idol that absorbed
Each thought and feeling of his soul,—when he,
The star of chivalry, who in himself
United all the noble attributes
With which romance in fantasy invests
Her heroes,—when *he* lingered as a guest
Within the clime where he had fought to gain
That freedom, which in after times he strove
In vain to win for his devoted land,—
'Twas here he made his home. And beautiful
And bright as are the forms of loveliness,
With which Nature has decked this favoured spot,
Yet every mountain, rock, and shore, and wood,
Glow with new beauty in the poesy
Of his remembrance. For his soul was fraught
With poesy, but it was of the kind
Which speaks to Earth in deeds and not in words,
And mingles with mankind to lead them on
To happiness and glory, and seeks not
To dream in solitude, and conjure up
Ideal shapes of beauty, and to hold
With them ideal converse, eloquent
Perchance, yet adding little to the sum

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Of human good. They cherish here with pride,
His sacred memory. On yonder point,
His monument, reared by the youthful band
Of soldier students, gleams in sunshine, pure
And bright as his own name in history.
They show his garden, too, which he was wont,
'Tis said, to cultivate with his own hands,
And in its shades to spend his hours of thought.
'Tis a wild spot upon the very face
Of a huge precipice, where a dark cliff
Receding leaves a little sheltered slope
Of verdant turf. The black rock rises high
Above you, naked, save where forest shrubs
And wild flowers grow along its clefts, nursed there
By waters dripping from its secret depths.
Upon the green a sparkling fountain throws
Its cooling waters in the summer air,
And showering back into a marble font
That bears his name, they trickle on to bound
With gentle murmur down the precipice
Which plunges headlong to the river's brink.
'Tis a sweet shaded place, fairer perchance
From contrast with the fearful scenes around.
'Tis like his brief sojourn in quiet here

Contrasted with the strife and gloom, which marked
The other years of his eventful life.

But in the savage mountain scenes, through which
I wander now along the river's brink,
Is found full many a spot as fair
As that wild, holy garden ; and the hand
Of art in kindness leaves still undisturbed.
Their forest graces,—or when it has dared
To pierce their sacred shades, it still has been
To heighten, not to mar their charms.
If the bright, fabled goddess Nature, whose
Ideal worship has so long intralld
My soul, had aught of being or of life
Save in poetic fantasy,—if she
Were not a dream and an illusion like
Aught else that ever brought a joy to me,—
'Tis here that I would fix her home. Here, where
The river, mountains, rocks, and woods, have come
To do her homage ; and around her throne
Beauty is gathered in its wildest forms.—

That stern old ruin crowning the steep hill
With its proud diadem ; those thrilling cliffs
Asunder rent and darkly lowering o'er

The noble river, which so gently sleeps
In its wild cradle like a froward child
Whom victory has lulled to rest ; the far,
Far landscape and the glittering village, through
That gloomy vista shining with their hues
As bright as ever painter's pencil made,
Or poet's fancy feigned ; that fair wide sweep
Of woodland hills and verdant fields, o'er which
The shadows of the summer clouds would seem
To be for ever coursing ; the white sail
On the bright waters ; the thick wooded slope
Frosted with chestnut flowers ; the wild walk
O'er-arched with forest trees, and winding on
Among wild flowers and dark moss-grown rocks ;—
The gushing murmur of the mountain brook,
Winding its dark course to the river's bed ;
The fearful precipice upon whose brink
We stand, and see far down beneath our feet
The tops of the tall trees which grow along
The base.—Above, beneath, around is spread
Beauty in every shape that wins the eye,
Or soothes the feelings, or exalts the soul.

At every hour,—in the bright morning, when
Light fleecy clouds along the mountain-tops

Are floating, and the sun new risen throws
On river, hills, and plain, the glowing hues
Of childhood ; or when evening spreads
Over the scene the gray and sober light
Of age ; or when night's darkness shrouds it with
The fearful gloom of death, and all is dim
And undefined except the lurid train
Of light which steamboat fires throw across
The trembling waters, or the startling flash
Of the sheet lightning, which an instant tips
The mountains with its dazzling light, and turns
The river's stream to liquid fire ; or when
Over the whole the moon has thrown her soft
Tremulous light, as bright, and beautiful,
And indistinct, as are our hopes beyond
The grave.—At every hour, on every side,
The still unwearied eye is met with new
And ever varied forms of loveliness.

Oh ! I have gazed upon these glowing scenes,
And trod these forest paths, and lingered still
In their wild lonely haunts, until almost
I've wished myself a woman or a child,
That I might weep away the pleasant weight
Of feelings that oppressed me. I have watched

'The swiftly gliding hours, and sadly felt
'That I should tear myself away ; yet still
I linger here, as if bound by the chain
Which keeps the fettered lover at the feet
Of human beauty. My last hour has come,
And I must hasten on. But yet full oft
In future times, when toil, and care, and woe
Press heavily upon me, I will leave
My earthly frame to play my weary part
In the sad farce of life, and borne away
On fancy's wings I'll seek these shades again,—
And drain another draught of beauty here,
And gather strength to struggle with my kind,
And win new life to bear unyielding still
The sickening tortures of humanity.

* * * * *

“ Once more upon the waters.” How the boat
Trembles through its huge bulk with the dread power
Of life within, alike the human frame
When shaken by the o'erexcited soul.
Swift dashing now through that wild mountain pass,—
And now the upraised eye recoils in awe

From the dread majesty of those dark cliffs,
And now it wanders through to rest at ease
Upon the soft and crowded foliage
Of the thick-wooded dells which calmly sleep
Between the rugged heights. Again!—Again!—
And now 'tis past. Yet still we turn to gaze
Through that dark portal on the lovely spot
Beyond, with somewhat of the fond regret,
With which our earliest parents turned to catch
A glimpse of Eden through its closing gates.
Fair scenes are still around me. But I've drunk
Too deeply there of beauty,—I have loved
The genius of those swift-receding shades
With far too pure a passion to be now
Inthrall'd by other and inferior charms.

* * * * *

Up the high Catskill mountains' toilsome steeps,
Wearily, slowly winding. Now along
The precipice's brink, sending the eye
Down the deep glen, striving in vain to pierce
The dense, dark foliage, and catch at least
A glimpse of white foam from the mountain stream

Which, brawling on far down below, sends up
Its cooling, freshening murmur to the ear.
Now passing on beneath the dark rocks piled
In beautiful confusion far above,
Half seen, half hid by clustering foliage.
Now gazing up in wonder at the fair
And glittering mountain castle reared on high,
Amid such wild and savage scenes, as if
The mountain spirits, and no human hand
Had placed it there. Up the steep ascent now
Toilfully straining, and above us wave
The starry chestnut flowers and the dark
And massive foliage of the hemlock. Now,
Pausing to gaze upon the mountain hut,⁸
O'er whose unsightly ruins genius throws
The light of immortality. And now,
Watching the various mountain flowers that deck
Our way.—The fair and clustering laurel bloom,
The bright wild tulip like a crimson star
Among the deep green foliage, and the fern
Waving its graceful plumes o'er the dark rocks.
And striving now to catch another glimpse
Of those fair walls in vain,—till the wild scenes
Around us, and the dreamy influence
Of summer evening almost make us think

That they but mocked us, and have fled away
Alike the magic castle of Saint John.⁹

* * * * *

On the high mountain top, far, far above
The world. A wild, wide, boiling sea of mist
Is spread around, the beautiful phantasm
Of the true ocean,¹⁰ which once swept above
'These glowing lands. Its pale waves roll not now
With the free dash of life, but slowly rise
Like phantoms, and with ghostlike motion glide
Along, to dash all noiselessly against
The rock-bound shore. And yet 'tis like, so like
The wide deep sea, that fancy peoples it
With the strange monsters of the deep, and we
Can scarce believe that fellow-mortals there
Beneath the waves are toiling carelessly
In the dull work of life. Its spectral depths
Are opening now, and bright and verdant isles
Are shining through. Again the misty waves
Close over them, and all is ocean now.
Again bright fields and dark-green woods shine through
The rent veil, and its scattered folds are rolled

Into light fleecy clouds, which float along
Upon the summer wind. And now these melt
Before the glowing sun, and naught is left
But dazzling, beautiful reality.

The golden hue of harvest,—the dark woods,—
The bright green pasture lands,—the rivulet
Alike a white thread thrown all carelessly
On the green velvet,—the low rustic roof,—
The distant village glittering with the sun,—
The river calmly lying there alike
A polish'd mirror, and the whiter sail
Gleaming on its bright waters,—those green isles
Like emeralds set in silver,—and the far,
Wide landscape spreading on beyond
In still extending beauty till the eye
Is pained, the soul dazzled—faint—bewildered.

How often have I wished that I could soar
Far, far above the earth, and poised alone
In mid-air, gaze upon its beauties spread
Beneath, softened by distance and relieved
From every harsh and jarring trait. My wish
Is granted now. But never in my dreams
Did fancy frame so fair a scene as this.

* * * * *

Wearied with Nature.—Now to plunge once more
Into the joyous throng of fellow-men.

Thy crowded street, fair walls and porticoes,
And pretty grass-plots, Saratoga ! now
Are all before me. It is well to blend,
As they do here, the country's beauty with
The city's splendour. It is wisely done
To mingle nature's soft and swelling curves
With the straight formal lines of art. I like
To see these gardens, trees, and flowers. 'Tis
The homage nature wrests from art. I like
To see that others worship at my shrine.

But there's a flower like one that blooms upon
The Catskill mountains ; and it makes me sad
To see it here drooping and soiled with dust
From the bright chariot wheels of yonder cit,
Who looks as if he thought that his own face
Shone with his coach's splendour. And I like
This ever new and ever flowing stream
Of faces, each a study in itself.

See there the puny politician puffed
With news which he has gathered from

The papers ; labouring with his burden like
The mountain in the fable, and with such
Tumultuous energy discharging it
On each unhappy listener. And here
The purse-proud city merchant, who has sold
His body, soul, and almost life itself
For gold, and seeks to purchase with it now
Refinement, and a character for taste
And science : but, alas ! his thoughts are still
Chained to his counter, and his talk still rings
Of dollars. There the lordly democrat,
Brimful of freedom and equality,
Yet scanning every stranger, and afraid
To offer him the common courtesies
Of life, before he learns his name and *rank*.—
To all who are above him cringing like
A European slave ; to all below
More haughty than a European lord.
And there the city fopling clothed in grace
As in a garment,—but I'll waste no verse
On him.—Oh ! he who has the power to read
The human soul beneath the flimsy veil
Which human craft throws o'er it,—he may drain
A sparkling draught of laughter here. But yet
Within its dregs the bitterness of scorn

Is lurking still. One hour here, and how
The chain is galling me!—Heighho! I wish
That I were in the woods again. In truth,
The others seem to wish so too. A cloud
Hangs on each brow, and I can mark in each
A quick, unquiet wandering of the eye,
Which shows a restless wish for something that
They have not. Can it be, that they, like me,
Are deep in love with Nature? Can it be,
That they have left their hearts in her wild haunts,
And long to kneel before her shrine again?
Ah, no! I see it now—hark to that harsh,
Loud-clanging bell! It is the dinner-bell.
Now see the joy that flashes o'er each face
And sparkles from each eye. Alas! alas!
'Twas hunger, not the love of Nature which
Had thrown a cloud upon their brows. 'Twas meat
And drink that they were panting for, and not
The wild sweet eloquence of Nature. Well!
They all are seated round the table now,
And they seem very happy in the din
Of rushing waiters, clanging knives and forks,
And clashing plates. But the poor music, how
It strives to raise itself above the harsh,
Discordant din, and seeks in vain to throw

The dignity of thought and feeling o'er
A base and earthly function. Ah! I see
They have immortal souls, and there are things
Which make them think, and times when they can feel
How lovingly they gloat upon each dish,
And with what thought and science they can tell,
How each should be devoured. And in all
This wild excitement, still how zealously,
Yet awkwardly they keep the stern command
Of British tourists, that the fork should be
A spoon. But the poor soul, how it must toil
To free itself from all this mass of food
With which they cumber its immortal powers.
Heighho! I wish that I were in the woods
Again. Must I wait here until they end
This weary gorging, still beginning, still
Unceasing? Well! thank Heaven the dinner ends.
And now the man of fashion, emulous
Of glory, ranges round his dozen kinds
Of wine, looking with lofty, lordly scorn
Upon his humble neighbour, who gets drunk
With only half a dozen. And now those
Who wish to keep the little intellect
That eating leaves, are free to wander forth
Into the air again. I like this proud

And vine-wreathed portico. I like to see
The groups of children coursing through its length
With faces fresh as flowers, and graceful forms
Still undisfigured by the hand of art.
I like to hear the shrill and laughing burst
Of their sweet voices. 'Tis alike the sound
Of mountain waters, only not so soft.
But yet I do not like the solemn way
In which the grown-up children ride around
Their little painted hobby horses on
The little railroad circle. And within,
The "recreative garden" where they roll
The nine-pin balls, I do not like the pond
In which they keep tame fishes to be caught
By visitors at such a price per hour,
And then thrown back again, when they have wrenched
The barbed hook from their bleeding jaws. Oh how
I wished that they were in the fishes' place,
And I myself a customer. But this
Is for the men. As for the fairer sex.—

But softly!—softly!—They, the morning stars
Of life; they, whose bright smiles alone inspire
The soldier's daring, statesman's eloquence,
And poet's fancy,—and it may be, too;

This careless rambling verse, which leads me now
Its wild-goose course, oh ! they must not be named
With aught approaching e'en to ribaldry.
And there are faces here, bright as e'er formed
The basis of a poet's dream, and ne'er
Did bard before the shrine of beauty bow,
With feelings deeper, holier than mine.
But yet if there be aught by which the stream
Of admiration is a moment soiled,
To name it were a brother's part, and with
A brother's gentleness it shall be done.
First, then, I wish that they would never lend
Their sanction to the foul intemperance
Of men by e'en a single glass of wine.
In woman's soul there is, or ought to be,
Something too pure to be polluted with
One single drop of alcohol. 'Tis true,
That it may aid the forced vivacity
Which is the fashion now. 'Tis true, that what
Is only affectation, may be changed
By wine to nature. Yet, much as I loathe
All affectation, it is better still
Than an approach by e'en a single step
To maudlin folly. And I wish that they
Would wear the fashion out, which grafts this forced

And foreign manner on their native grace.
'Tis so unsuited to their nature, which
Is gentle, grave, contemplative. Now look
At yonder lovely girl, before whom stands
That pretty piece of male conceit. Observe
Her flashing eyes, her eager bending form,
Her quickly waving hands, and her fair face
Distorted into archness. Would you know
What subject moves this graceful energy
Of gesture? Do not ask. It is grimace
Which they are changing there, and not ideas.
As for the words,—why, they are things of course.
Yet this is not her nature. Ah! they are
Too soft, too facile, and too diffident
Of their own charms. They are too apt to yield
To models far inferior to themselves.
Oh, would they but believe the word of one
Whose ruling passion ever was the love
Of beauty, and whose life has been its search,
Would they believe me when I say that grace
Lives but with Nature. If they would but leave
To voice the melody, to form the grace,
To features the expression Nature gave,
Oh! then indeed they would be deities
Worthy the glorious land o'er which they reign.

But there is one face here,—I see it now,
From her large bright dark eye there flashes still
The pure sweet eloquence of woman's thought,
And over her smooth cheek are passing still
The ever changing, ever lovely hues
Of sensibility, and on her lip
Is still enthroned the soft and gentle smile
Of female tenderness. But she is now
Just bursting into womanhood ; and if
Her face should ever shine upon my way
Again, it will perhaps be ruined too
By some base foreign affectation. Now
See yonder belle. How gracefully, and yet
How artfully she keeps that crowd of beaux
Around her ; and with how much skill she plays
On all, the bright artillery of teeth
Like pearls, and coral lips, and sparkling eyes,
And glossy ringlets. Brilliant !—beautiful !
But ah ! that cold and selfish glance she casts
Around, to gather in and estimate
The full amount of admiration which
She has been levying. And see that flash
Of fierce disdain launched sidelong at the head
Of some fair rival. Curses ! curses on
The folly which has made me learn to read

The human face, until the slightest thoughts
Are clear to me, as if we had been made
As Momus wished. Alas! I'm like the child
Who breaks the magic glass which used to lend
His little show-box all its glories. I
Can ne'er be fooled again. Yet they are fair,
How very, very fair. Look at them now,
As they are promenading through this fine
Old portico. Observe their glossy hair,
Their brilliant eyes, their smooth and glowing cheeks,
Their matchless forms. But—but—that foreign walk!
There's something so much like a peacock's gait
In the odd, stately way in which they swing along,
Sweeping from side to side their curving trains.—

But this will never do. For I had sworn
That through one single month at least, the fiend
Of sarcasm should be still within me. I
Had sworn that for one month I'd find or feign
Things which should raise within me other thoughts
Than this cold blighting ridicule, which now
Has stamped its scowl upon my brow, its sneer
Upon my lip; and has so nearly bound
In icy chains the once warm gushing fount
Of youthful feeling. I will keep my oath.

But then I must not linger here. Lake George
Is wooing me to its sweet solitudes.
Farewell, the dreary joys and lonely crowds
Of Saratoga ! 'Tis in vain for me
To seek to mingle with my kind. My soul
Is like the mystic harp, which will not give
Its music forth to aught except the breath
Of heaven, and is jarred to discord by
The human hand. Then let me kneel once more
Repentant at the shrine of Nature. She
Intrudes not on the weariness which springs
From man's perversity, and from no fault
Of hers. With more than woman's gentleness
She waits until the cloud has passed, and then
With brighter smiles hastens to charm again.

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Alone ! Alone !—Oh ! not a single sail
Ruffles the gentle, smooth, yet brilliant face
Of this pure water. Not a trace of man
Is on its lonely isles. Its wooded shores
Are still almost as wild as they were left
By the wild Indian. How I love to float
In the light rocking skiff, and gaze far down

Through the pure waters on the fairy realm
Which like another world is spread beneath.
'Tis beautiful to see its rock-laid floors
All checkered o'er with ever-waving veins
Of golden sunshine. It is beautiful
To see its glittering natives sporting there
Unconscious of the evil eye that rests
Upon them. It is beautiful to see
'The cross-barred perch, and silvery speckled trout
Gracefully rising to the sportsman's bait.
'Tis beautiful to see them poised in doubt.
And best of all it is, to see them dash
From the barbed hook, unharmed away. Oh ! now
I do not wonder that the Indians held
The selfsame faith which throws its brilliant grace
Over the Greek and Roman poesy.
I do not wonder that they too believed
In countless gods who dwelt in rivers, lakes,
And mountains. I have gazed on the bright depths
Beneath me, till I almost thought to see
Some river goddess swiftly flashing through
The crystal wave, with form of dazzling grace,
And golden hair, and laughing upturned face,
Too beautiful for human words. And I
Have shouted to the mountain spirits, till

Their deep and solemn answers threw a damp
Upon my soul, and almost made me rue
The boyish mood which led me to disturb
Their slumbers. The poor Indians!—E'en
Their savage conquerors, they say, were struck
By the pure solemn spirit which is spread
Around this lonely lake. E'en they, though used
To yield obedience to their savage thirst
For gold and blood, and not the gentle sway
Of fancy,—even they did clothe its shores
In superstition's solemn hues, and named
The waters sacred,¹¹ and across the sea
Conveyed them, to be kept for pious rites.
If the white savage thus could own the power
Of these pure holy scenes, what must have been
Their influence upon the wild, untaught,
And fancy-governed Indians. With what fair
Yet awful deities, forgotten now,
They must have peopled these enchanted waves
And echoing shores. Of all their bleeding ties
Which we have torn apart, methinks the love
That bound them to this lake must still have been
The strongest. And in truth they tell me that
A few years since an Indian left his tribe,¹²
And came to dwell alone on yonder isle.

Lonely and sad, he sought not with the whites
Aught of companionship, and asked no boon
Except to live in scenes endeared to him,
Perchance by some remembrance of his own,
Or by a parent's tale, or it might be
By some tradition of his tribe. His food,
After the simple custom of his race,
Was won from the pure waters of the lake,
Or its wild shores ; for there the deer and bear,
And e'en the panther lingers still, and still
The eagle soars around its rugged cliffs.
Alone he glided o'er the peopled wave,
Or trod alone the forest wild,—save when
Some savage friend from the far West had come,
Wearing his nation's garb, sullen and stern,
Watching the Whites with eyes that seemed to gleam
With the fierce fire of vengeance long delayed.
But in the breast of him who thus had made
His home among his people's foes, no thought
Like this appeared to linger. With the sad
And silent scorn, which speaks a soul subdued
Yet feeling still, he bore the taunts and jeers,
Which the cold, sneering white man ever heaps
Upon the lone and friendless. But still aught
Of kindness, e'en the slight friendly words

Spoken perchance in whim and wantonness
By fashion's votaries, whom chance had led
To the lone Indian's hut,—oh ! even these
Waked the wild feeling of the savage soul.
And when those selfsame loiterers had sought
These shores in after years, they wondered oft
To find their names remembered, and themselves
Addressed in tones of gratitude by one
Whom they had long forgotten. Firm and deep
The love of nature must have taken root
In that lone savage, if he thus could leave
His nation, friends, and kindred, and endure
The white man's contumely, and the stings
Of poverty, within the lands which teem
With luxury and wealth, to all except
Their rightful lords,—strongly and closely must
Its ties have twined themselves around his heart,
If he could calmly bear all this, and find
His recompense in nature's face alone.
He is dead now. And naught is left to mar
The white man's pleasure in these graceful wilds,
By calling up the saddened memory
Of the much-injured race from whom they were
So foully torn. That wild and simple race !
They seemed suited by nature to these scenes.

The Indian bark and Indian warrior,
And his pure, gentle Indian bride, the prize
Of glory won in battle or the chase,
Sharing her husband's labours and his sports
In the pure air of heaven, mingling with his
Her very life, in all the boundless love
Of woman's soul, when undefiled by art ;--
Methinks that Indian bark and Indian pair
Were better suited to these gentle wilds,
Than yonder passing boat and gaudy crew
Of fashion's loiterers, wounding the eye
With their odd, grotesque forms and glaring garb,
Jarring the ear with their shrill chattering
And harsh laughter, glad in their brief escape
From the close, stifling walls where white men make
Their crowded dwelling-place, and where each vice
Thrives in the foul congenial atmosphere,
And sickening virtue droops, and beauty fades.

Well, they have passed, and now I am once more
Alone with nature. How the placid sheet
Of water gleams beneath the glowing sun !
Now the light breeze shivers its glassy face
In countless fragments all bright glittering,
As if the selfsame gems which deck its isles

Were scattered o'er its waves. And now the wind
Raises the mimic billows higher still,
Yet heaving all softly and gracefully,
As if they might be moved to sport, but ne'er
To wrath. But what is this that breasts the waves,
And seems to steer its course towards my skiff?
A wild wood squirrel¹³ voyaging alone
O'er the wide waters ! He has reached my oar
And clings upon its blade, and now he climbs,
All dripping to the boat. Poor little thing !
You must be tired indeed to trust yourself
To human beings ; or in these lone shades
Perchance thou hast not yet been taught that foe
And stranger mean the same. And now he peers
Over the vessel's side, and seems to think
Of launching on the weary wave again.
And now inquiringly he turns on me
His large dark eye. Safe ! safe ! my little friend.
It is not here that I could bring myself
To harm thee. Now he courses on along
The vessel's edge, and finds a sheltered place
Beneath the bench ; and there he panting sits,
Weary and worn, and looks as if he felt
The dignity of being rowed at ease.
Now we have neared the shore, and see ! upreared,

He's peering o'er the vessel's side again.
And now—splash ! he is gone ; with upraised head
And outstretched tail, right gallantly he stems
The surge. And now he gains the shore, and climbs
All dripping o'er the naked rocks, nor turns
To throw me e'en a single look of thanks.

Oh, in these wilds I am a boy again :
And pleasant tears are swelling in my eyes
I know not why, and I can laugh once more ;
Not the sad laugh of scorn, but the free burst
Of childhood's joy. How like a dream appears
The vice, the rage, the tumult, and the strife
Of the mad world which I have left behind.
And yet how often has the wrath of man
Pierced to these shades, and warred here, even here,
In scenes whose sweet and solemn eloquence
Might sooth to peace aught else but human rage.
How oft has human blood steeped these lone shores,
And even lent its foul, revolting tinge
To this pure wave ! Not in those border wars
Alone, whose robber carnage history
Records not, as too dark and foul for e'en
Her blood-stained page, but in the prouder strife
Which white men waged with white men o'er their prey,

Enriching with their mingling gore the soil,
Which each essayed to wrest from its true lords.
How often have these mountains echoed back
The spirit-stirring shouts of struggling foes,
Or the heart-chilling shrieks of children, wives,
And warriors, slain in cold butchery,
When the fierce joy of mortal strife had passed,
And left the bitterness of sad despair.
And in those wars what deep revenge was wreaked
By the fierce savage on the race that first
Assailed his home. He should have waited while
The rival nations fought above the spoil,
Until, like Esop's beasts of prey, they sank
Exhausted, and he might have wrested then
His birthright from the feeble grasp of both.
But he was far too thoughtless and too quick
To feel the charms of vengeance. Still his blood
Mixed with the stream poured out by those, who fought
To win the right to drive him from his home.
While he was visiting in wrath his wrongs
Upon one race of white men, he knew not
That he was strengthening another tribe
As false and ruthless. And e'en if his wild
And rude sagacity had taught him this,
Still was the draught of vengeance far too dear.

To be foregone. Like the crushed wasp, perchance
He found in driving home his dying sting
The only solace that was left him now,
For his destruction. But the storm of war
Long since has rolled away, and left behind
No trace except those aged fortresses,
Around whose mouldering walls the tourist pries
In search for relics. O'er the silent lake
Is spread tranquillity as deep and calm,
As when the simple savage held its shores
In peace and joy, and dreamed not that he had
In unknown lands, white *brothers* who would leave
Their homes, and over the Great Water come
To wrest away the fair inheritance
Their common father had bestowed on him.

Beauty and solitude ! Dearest to me
Of Nature's handmaids, and still worshipped most !
How absolute they reign united here !
When the vexed soul is lashed to rage, or stung
To torture in the strife of human things,
How sweet to linger here till joy succeeds
To pain, and placid calmness follows joy !
That gentle calm which steeps the soul of him,
Who rests in Nature's arms ! Would it could be

Eternal ! With what gladness would I change
For its sweet peace, aught that the world can give
Of joy or glory ! But it will not stay.
Even when courted most, how soon it yields
To listlessness and dull satiety !
And then there comes the restless thirst for change,
The feverish yearning for excitement's thrill,
And the impatient wish to find it e'en
In strife, rather than still to linger on
In sad inaction. Mark the waters now¹⁴
Of this lone lake ! Although their peaceful way
Is over glittering sands, and pavements seamed
With golden sunshine,—though they roam at will
Around these verdant isles, or gently sleep
Cradled within these high and graceful shores,
Which shield them from the tempest's wrath,—yet see !
When they at last escape from all this calm
And sheltered loveliness, see how they bound,
Dancing away in joy, reckless of aught
That may await them in the stormy world
Of waters, which they hasten on to join,
Happy, too happy, to have left behind
The sameness of these peaceful shades. And thus,
E'en thus it is with me ! I've lingered here
Till e'en these wilds have lost the power to charm,

And their deep quiet only serves to raise
Within my breast a fiercer restlessness.
I have exhausted every peaceful charm
Of Nature,—let me see her now in wrath.
My soul is cloyed with gentle loveliness,
And sick with placid beauty :—give me strife,—
Give me grandeur,—give me sublimity !

* * * * *

Far down within the dark and rock-walled glen
Where roar the Trenton Falls.¹⁵ How fearfully
That wild and turbid mountain stream winds through
Its rugged depths ! Now down the rocky pass
Raging in foam, or o'er the steep dark cliff
In thunder hurled ; then pausing at the base
An instant in the calm and silent mood
Which ever follows human rage ; and then
Sweeping along in sullen peaceful scorn,
Again to plunge, again to pause, again
To sweep away on its tumultuous course.

Oh there is beauty, wild, wild beauty here !
See there the parted waters gently stream
In waying ringlets o'er the rock's dark brow.

Here the united flood hurls o'er the cliff
Its amber wave, again to rise in white
And wintry wreaths,—sending far through the air
Its glittering spray, alike the drifted snow
Upon the winter's wind. And see! beside
That raging flood, a parted rivulet
Gently and tremblingly is climbing down
The rugged face of the black rock, alike
A timid cowering wife hastening to join
And sooth the angry feelings of some fierce
And haughty lord. Beautiful! Beautiful!

But—but—curses upon that little mill
And grog-shop! What! could they not bear to be
Alone with nature for one single hour?
Can we ne'er lay aside our earthly part,
But must its base and sordid wants still mix
With every thought and feeling of the soul?
This cursed guide-book, too, which mingles still
Its proud bombastic burlesque with the deep
And simple eloquence of rocks and floods,
And almost forces me to break again
My oath of gravity. And yet—e'en yet,
'Tis beautiful. And sometimes, too, sublime—
Ay, thrillingly sublime; the more, perhaps,

From the dread thought that death is at our side,
Fastening on us his cold sepulchral gaze.
When clinging to the narrow ledge of rock,
Fancy can almost frame in the dark flood
His fleshless face, and hollow glaring eye,
And naked jaws distended with their wild
And ghastly grin. And those tremendous cliffs !
How gloomily they rise above us now,
And darkly frown upon our path. And here
Each rock beneath our feet teems with remains,
Which bear the fancy back to times that have
No other *earthly* record. Ah ! but see
That busy, bustling man of science there,
With hammer, chisel, and gold spectacles.
He turns his back upon the living charms
Of nature, and alike the earth-worm strives
To mine his way into her mouldering corpse.
Thank Heaven ! I am no geologist.
Yet I love Nature still. Too well, indeed,
To take much pleasure in dissecting her.

Yes, there is beauty, much of beauty here,
And something too of grandeur. But who stops
To watch the torrent's rage, when near at hand
Foams the proud ocean cataract ?

Who heeds the torrent's roar, when on his ear
An ocean's thunder is about to burst?
Then forward, forward still!—Niagara!

* * * * *

Over Ontario's broad and sea-like breast,
Swift hurrying onward to that mighty shrine,
Single, unrivalled, in her proudest hours,
By Nature framed to stand alone on earth,
As worthy of her fair divinity.
How often have I longed to worship there!
Amid the travellers' legends, how the name
Of that proud cataract has ever caught
My careless ear, even from infancy!
How oft have I my fancy tasked to frame
Some image of its fearful loveliness!
Whene'er with other and inferior charms
Nature around me threw her spells, how still
I sighed to see her there,—there, where alone
She wears her brightest robes of majesty!
And that malign and gloomy influence,—
That evil genius which has ever marked
My hopes for disappointment, and through life

Still from my lips has dashed the cup of joy,
She slumbers now. Beneath a sultry sky,
And through the hushed and passive air we hold
Our prosperous course ; and the broad waters all
Gently and slowly are heaving, alike
Some forest monster stretched asleep beneath
The burning sun. Soon shall we reach the point,
Where first the eye can catch the snow-white cloud,
Which canopies the mighty cataract
For ever, and soon on the ear shall burst
Its thunder. Forward ! forward !—Ah ! but see
That sullen cloud which slowly rises now
Across our way, glooming alike the wall
Of fearful darkness, which in days of old
Barred Arasmanes from *his* Aden !¹⁶ See !
Higher and higher boil its sulphury wreaths
Of vapour, and the gathering masses now
On either hand sweep slowly on to join
Its strength, solemn, majestic, stern, alike
The mustering bands of earthly armaments.
Black, black the fearful gloom of all beneath,
Dark as the soul of Byron,—save when seamed
By the quick lightning's thrilling, dazzling streak,
Darting alike the pang of painful thought,
Which shoots so oft across the gloomy brow

Of genius. But above the blackness rests
A soft and glittering wreath of fleecy snow,
Which overhangs the sullen cloud beneath,
Like the feathery foam on an ocean wave,
Or white plumes floating o'er the dark array
Of mail-clad warriors. As yet it seems
As if all Nature watched in stillness, hushed
To silence by the selfsame awe, which chills
The human gazer : but the freshening breeze
Tells that the frightened air is flying now
Before the storm, and now the rising waves
Are flying too. Yet each wave seems to chase
The one before, and turning still to watch
The coming cloud, as if they fled in sport
As well as fear. O'er the broad waters now
The cloud has thrown its gloomy shade, and now
The rising wind is sweeping fiercely by,
And now the frightened waves, crested with foam,
Are rushing wildly on, and their light spray
Around me falls, mixed with the first broad drops
From the dark thunder-cloud. And one by one
The human beings, who had crowded here
To watch the coming storm, have shrunk away ;
And I am left alone,—alone with him,
Whose voice is on the waters, and who flies

Upon the pinions of the wind, and makes
The clouds his chariot. And thus, e'en thus,
It should be. 'Tis not now, that earthly things
Should wrest from me my thoughts, now when they
seek

To raise themselves on high, as if they felt
His very presence, whose pavilion is
Dark waters and thick clouds. What is this wild
Sublimity of feeling and of thought
Which thrills each nerve of my excited frame?—
What is this high and daring recklessness,
Which makes my bosom proudly swell to front
The flashing lightning, and my spirit leap
With joy responsive to the thunder's note?—
What is it but communion with the dread
And all-pervading soul, the mighty power
Which, though for ever present, now has bowed
The heavens, and above, beneath, around,
Speaks to each thrilled and overpowered sense,
In his eternal strength and majesty?

In darker gloom, and fiercer wrath, and yet
In wilder beauty raves th' increasing storm.
Quicker and quicker the bright lightning gleams.
Louder and louder swells the angry roar

Of mingling winds and waters. Far above,
The rattling, crashing, echoing thunder rolls
Through the rent heavens like the master voice,
Which sways the elemental war below.
Higher and higher dash the surging waves.
Their beautiful array is broken now,
And tumbling, foaming, bursting, boiling on,
They rush against our trembling bark, which still,
Though wavering, onward holds its plunging course,
Still like the fabled storm-ship¹⁷ dashing on,
Full against wind and wave. And now the clouds,
And winds, and floods close in their fiercest strife,
And now the tossing foam, and driving spray,
And dashing rain shroud from the sight all else,
Except the lightning's dazzling, blinding flash,
And drown in their wild uproar all of sound,
Save the loud thunder's still increasing voice.

Nature ! Adored Nature ! Long have I bowed
A soul-wrapped worshipper before the might
Of thy still new and varying loveliness !
I have smiled with thee in thy joyous spring,
And with a lover's rapture watched thy charms
Ripening in summer's warm voluptuous glow,
And mused with thee in autumn's pensive gloom,

And mourned with thee in winter's loneliness.
I have adored thee in each peaceful mood,
For thou art fair in all. But in thy wrath,
How passing lovely! How I envy now
That storm-bird of the sea,¹⁸ which, midway perched
On some high cliff, in sadness droops when all
Is calm and tranquil, mournfully watching
The sullen dash of the sluggish billows,
Silent, and dark, and lonely as a bard,
When his brief hour of inspiration's past.
Yet when the signals of the coming storm,—
The lightning's flash and volleying thunder break
Its musings, then that tempest-loving bird,
Roused it may be by the same thrilling sense
Of joy which even now within me swells,
Launches itself upon the sweeping blast,
Cleaves in wild joy its way through the white peak
Of some foam-crested wave, or darts far down
Into the deep abyss of parted floods,
Again to rise, again to sweep away,
Riding upon the pinions of the wind,
And revelling through rack, and spray, and foam,
Proudly exulting in the buoyant strength,
Which braves in sport the tempest's wildest wrath.

The thunder-storm has passed. Far on towards
Its ocean home the dark cloud holds its course,
And through its bosom now less dazzling plays
The quivering lightning, and upon the ear
The muttering thunder's last faint echo dies.
O'er the wide deck again the varied groups
Of human faces spread in joy around,
And the affrighted winds are hushed to peace,
And the subsiding waves as softly heave
As the white bosom of yon blue-eyed girl,
O'er whose fair face there lingers still the light
Of that romance, which like a halo crowns
The hours of youth and beauty,—that sweet glow
Of mingled thought and feeling, beautiful
As the pure golden light, which spreads e'en now
Over the face of Nature. For the sun
Bursts through the scattered clouds, and gilds with joy
The smiling waves, and paints as if in sport
A mimic rainbow on each cloud of spray,
Dashed from the wheels of this our ocean car.
On! on!—Niagara! Niagara!

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From many a wide-spread inland sea,
And swollen by many a lonely mountain stream,
The ocean flood of the wild forest comes.
Compressed, restrained, within those narrow walls
It bounds along, tossing in air its crests
Of billowy foam ; like some wild beast of prey,
Lashing himself to rage, throwing on high
His waving mane before the final plunge.

The wide and dazzling amphitheatre
Of falling waters ! There the ocean stream
Hurles down in thrilling grandeur its bright flood
Of living emerald ; brilliant, lovely,
In its pure sky-like hue, and flecked with bursts
Of snow-white foam, all gently gliding down,
Like fleecy clouds upon the summer heaven.
And here it spreads one broad and dazzling sheet
Of liquid alabaster. There again
It throws far down an endless shower of pearls
Bright glittering in the sun. Beauty ! wild, bright,
And glorious beauty ! Yet it brings no smile,
And gives no calm and placid joy. We gaze
With awe alone, deep, voiceless, breathless awe.
Its wide immensity ! Its thrilling depth !
Its heavenly radiance ! Its eternal might !

Oh, 'tis not earthly beauty ! See ! it woos
The rainbow down from its high place in heaven.
There its soft, mellow tints are thrown athwart
The dazzling brilliancy of that proud wall
Of flashing waters. There again it bends
Gently and smilingly o'er the dread gulf,
Which boils and foams below. And now it clasps
In its embrace the whole bright scene at once,
As if it sought to claim as heaven's own,
What is too fair for earth. And that deep flood !
How gracefully it sweeps over the ledge,
In the proud consciousness of boundless power,
Gentle, majestic, alike omnipotence,
How calm and beautiful when unopposed.—

But at the base, where its dread strength is hurled
Far down in wrath upon conflicting floods,
How the earth shudders ! And the iron rocks,
How they too tremble ! And how the rent air
Is whirled abroad in storms, with driving spray,
Which soars away on high, to hide itself
Among the clouds ! That wild, tremendous roar !
What dreadful thoughts it raises of the fierce
Eternal strife which they are waging there,
Veiled as in mercy from the human eye

By that white shroud of spray, still upward thrown
In sulphury wreaths ! What fearful, thrilling shouts,
What wild unearthly cries the fancy frames
From that tumultuous, endless burst of sound !

Oh God ! oh God !—The dread sublimity of hell,
Spread out beneath the dazzling hues of heaven !

In vain—in vain ! Alas ! and what are words,
'That they should fondly hope to picture forth,
What makes the eye recoil, the cheek to blanch,
And the pale lip to quiver with the force
Of undefined emotions ? Thy proud form,
Niagara ! which robes itself with light
As with a garment,—thy resplendent brow,
Crowned with the rainbow's halo,—thy dread strength,
Unwearied and unbounded,—thy free course,
Resistless and eternal,—thy loud voice,
Which ever shakes the heavens and the earth,—
Thy radiant beauty, and thy fearful wrath,—
Oh ! they are stamped for ever on my soul.
Thy memory is garnered in the hoard
Of sacred thoughts and feelings which are not
For man's companionship. When the sad toil
Of human life has girdled me around

With grovelling thoughts, and base and loathsome things,
And sordid feelings, till my weary soul
Is sick for beauty, I will think of thee.
When the dark shapes of vice and woe, which crowd
The haunts of men, have almost made me doubt
The being of a God, I'll think of thee.
When I would seek to tear my soul away
From every chain which binds it to the earth,
And soar on high among the loftiest realms
Of thought and fantasy, I'll think of thee.
But never more will I with human words
Profane thy glorious immortality.

* * * * *

My pilgrimage is ended now. My brief
And swiftly passing Month of Freedom all
Is spent. Farewell the light and bounding course
Of the unfettered hours, and the wild joy
Of the free range o'er land and flood! Farewell
The buoyant air of the high mountain-top,
And the wild majesty of its lone rocks
And woods! Farewell the smiling, tranquil joy,
And sheltered beauty of the cultured vale!

Farewell the graceful river's winding course,
Bordered with beauty, and the thrilling voice
Of the bright cataract, and the wide-spread
And heaving bosom of the gentle lake !
Farewell the wide, wide ocean's fearful might,
Now in unfettered grace and boundless strength
'Tossing its waves on high, now calmly spread
At rest, dimpled by billows coursing on
Like bright smiles passing o'er the sleeping face
Of beauty ! And dearest of all to me,
Farewell the deep lone forest where the hand
Of Art has swept no charm from the wild face
Of Nature !—The tall trees rearing on high,
Their parent stems, far, far above the dense
And pale green underwood, the graceful fern,
'The sparse wild flowers, the prostrate mouldering
trunks,
'The moss-grown rocks, and the reclining stems,
Uprooted by the war of elements,
And caught like falling warriors leaning on
'Their comrades' arms, and the gigantic coils
Of the wild grape-vine twining round the whole,
And binding in its huge and snake-like folds
The living with the dead,—farewell ! farewell !

But thou, my little book,—thou who hast been
The partner of my happy wanderings,
And with thy lone and sweet companionship
Hast cheered each vacant hour, and chased away
Each thought of gloom, thou shalt at least go forth
In freedom to the world from which I now
Must tear myself away. And thou shalt dare
The critic's lash, and the cold worldling's sneer,
And the light jeers of fashion's thoughtless crowd,
Which ever worships where its leaders bid,
And ever throngs in mockery around
The strange and friendless. Yes, thou shalt depart
Unaided and alone to brave the world.
No friend shall usher thee in kindness through
Its portals, and no patron's name shall stamp
Thy page, to win for thee the ready smile
Of all his servile train of worshippers.
'Tis not for such as me that friendship spreads
Its mirage, and I am not of a race
Or nation to entreat the patronage
Of a created being. Thou shalt go
Alone—but, yet—my country ! 'tis to thee
That I devote it. Not with the cold smile
Which gilds the hate of what the world calls friends,
Not with the venal spirit, which was wont

In olden times to sway the intercourse
Of patrons and of bards,—but with a child's
Pure holy feeling, I would tender thee
This simple tribute from the hand of one
Among thine humblest sons : rude it may be,
And valueless save in the filial love,
Which prompts the offering. Would that its page
Were worthier of thine eye. Would that its wild,
And all unpolished numbers might express
The patriot love, which glows within my breast,
And which alone with the parental tie
Survives the wreck of childhood's boundless love,
And even forms a home and rallying point
For crushed and baffled feelings, driven back
From the vain search for other sympathies.
Then with the love that dies not, hail to thee,
My native land ! And if thy sturdy sons
Of commerce coldly look on one, who leaves
The beaten track of wealth to wander o'er
The wilds of fancy, I can well forgive
Their scorn, and own perchance their censure just ;
And I can find me other ties to bind
Me to thee. Still to me thy face of wild
And matchless beauty wears a mother's smile,
And still thy skies beam on me with the bright

Yet chastened lustre of a mother's eye,
And still the music of thy winds, and woods,
And floods wakes in my soul the secret founts
Of feeling, which arise not now to aught
Except the magic of a mother's voice.
My more than mother !—For the fleshly tie
Is clogged with fond regrets, and chilling fears,
And every glance of filial love brings home
Tidings of grief, and sickness, and decay,
Which overshadow the soul with gloomy thoughts
Of death, and sad surviving loneliness.
But thou, my country ! not a shade of gloom,
No dark forebodings and no thoughts of woe
O'ercloud the joyous love, with which I gaze
Upon thy youthful strength and loveliness.
Thou shalt live on exulting in thy might,
Growing in majesty and beauty, long,
Long after life's brief warfare,—this wild strife
Between my earthly and unearthly part,—
Shall have consigned them both to rest alike
In dark oblivion. Oh ! it has been
My earliest dream of childhood, and the hope
And all absorbing end of after years,
To link my name with thy proud destinies.
Yet if a blighted manhood mar the hopes

Of my too sanguine youth,—if 'tis in vain
That I may seek to earn a lasting place
In thy remembrance, let me hope to win
At least one fond indulgent parent's glance,
One passing smile, and I will ask no more.



N O T E S.

Note 1.—Page 12.

Of Irak's dove.

The carrier pigeon is said to have been brought originally from Bassorah, in Irak Arabi.

Note 2.—Page 12.

Mother of Waters.

The word Chesapeake is said to have signified, in the Powhatan language, "Mother of Waters."

Note 3.—Page 18.

"Ocean-like water."

See Smith's Hist. of Va. The voyage here alluded to was undertaken by Capt. Smith, in 1608, for the purpose of exploring the Chesapeake and its tributaries. It is, perhaps, one of the most remarkable expeditions recorded in history, if we consider the importance of its objects, and its complete success, in contrast with the slender means with which it was performed.—See Bancroft's Hist. U. S. ; Robertson's Hist. Amer. ; Marshall's Life of Washington, &c., &c.

Note 4.—Page 27.

Twin and rival villages.

Bristol and Burlington.

Note 5.—Page 29.

For the Spectre Ship, alias the Storm Ship, alias the Flying Dutchman, see Irving's Bracebridge Hall, and Moore's lines on passing Dead-Man's Isle.

Note 6.—Page 30.

The unnumbered smiles that dimpling play—

Ποντιων τε κυματων

ανηριβμον γελασμα.—ÆSCHYL.

Allusions to this same image may be discovered in subsequent passages..

Note 7.—Page 32.

The purple light

Of language.

Lumenque juventæ

Purpureum ——— afflarat—

VIRG.

Note 8.—Page 44.

The mountain hut.

Rip Van Winkle's hut.

Note 9.—Page 45.

Alike the magic castle of St. John.

See the Bridal of Triermain by Scott.

Note 10.—Page 45.

*The beautiful phantasm
Of the true ocean.*

Remains of sea-shells are found imbedded in the rocks throughout the Catskill Mountains.

Note 11.—Page 58.

—————*And named
The waters sacred.*

The French are said to have carried the waters of Lake George to France, to be used for baptism, and to have named it *Lac du Sacrement*, or something similar.

Note 12.—Page 58.

An Indian left his tribe.

I tell the simple story of this Indian exactly as it was told to me by the boatmen upon the lake. There is no doubt of its truth, I believe, whatever there may be with regard to its being worth repeating.

Note 13.—Page 62.

A wild wood squirrel.

My adventure with the squirrel is one of frequent occurrence upon Lake George. The brown squirrel, which is most common here, is remarkable for the largeness and brilliancy of its eye.

Note 14.—Page 66.

*Mark the waters now
Of this lone lake!*

The fall between Lake George and Lake Champlain is considerable, and the rapids highly picturesque.

Note 15.—Page 67.

The Trenton Falls.

I am told that the appearance of the falls changes with the state of the water. I did my best to describe them exactly as they were when I saw them. If they should not remain so, it is not my fault.

Note 16.—Page 71.

Barred Arasmanes from his Aden.

See the tale of Arasmanes, or the Seeker, by the author of Pelham.

Note 17.—Page 74.

Still like the fabled storm-ship.

See note 5, page 88.

Note 18.—Page 75.

That storm-bird of the sea.

The stormy Peterel.

THE END.











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